Friday 2/23

Dear Charles,

I read your review of Trilling's Sincerity and Authenticity with admiring interest, especially since I read Phillipa Foot in the N Y Rev. of Books, with its offensively la-de-da English intellectual imperialism: "The famous Sartrean waiter throwing himself into an exaggerated rendition of his role as a waiter is a case in point. Such superficial role playing is surely of no significance and only a bias such as Sartre's could have made it seem otherwise." I like your emphasis on relations between assent and credence--I suspect that the "assent which does not involve actual credence" may derive from the arbitrariness of postulates and the undecidability or undemonstrability of conclusions: "And the whole argument has the very curious consequence that, even in the realm of numbers, where one would have imaged that every formulable question can be proved or disproved, there are some questions which cannot be decided within the limits of a given language" (J. Findlay, "Goedelian Sentences," Mind, LI, 1942, 265). I don't see Trilling taking up the problem of the proof or demonstration of authenticity, and thereby he misses the relation of authenticity to violence, which is I think, a relation of engendering; that is, that the attempt to prove authenticity leads to violence as a form of proof, with the further result that, given the methods of proof, not much besides violence can be proved authentic by violence. Kurtz proves the authenticity of the horror through violence; what possible method is there to authenticate the true or the beautiful? The problem then may not be in authenticity as a value, but in the standards of proof. Erich Heller writes that Mann's Adrian Leverkuhn resembles Ludwig Wittgenstein--"the same almost paralyzing 'absoluteness' in the demands he made upon his work, the same withdrawn character, and in his own sphere the same fear that the pursuit of authenticity may have become 'too difficult.'" (The Ironic German, p.269n.) Perhaps the problem is in the authenticating of authenticity, in two senses. First, what status has authenticity as a philosophic value? Why should I be authentic? Second, what are the appropriate methods and standards of proof. My version of much recent history is that since the good hasn't found means of proving its authenticity, the "evil" has through its ability to prove itself subtly convoluted itself into "good." How could Trilling have taught at Columbia and not discovered the relations of the attempt to prove authenticity to the occupation of buildings and destruction of property? Are the standards of proof of authenticity unrealistic? That is, higher even than the proofs possible in science or mathematics?

(A)

(B) hence, a written account to be understood

SOLA

Cartwright's efforts to make, to find out, to be "PROVE" as a WORD

I agree. Am'ng. N.T. Keeping the will in check

Cartwright's views of himself and technology. science

Highgate. LEM coming down

(Len – Leonard – Leo)

Scottish chiefs — Bothwell
Frederick Gough
Loch-awe

Nd Highgate — Cartridge

Coleridge
Keats

highest pt. in London

waterlow Park

reading Jenny story of Robt. the Bruce

Henry Wallace
Lord in London:
Nd FDR Democrat

ambassador Bruce